

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Migratory Birds

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

The arctic tern migrates from the North to the South Pole and back again every year, the longest migration of any bird. Conserving migratory birds is fraught with challenges stemming from the fact they often depend upon a variety of habitats spread across multiple countries – it isn't enough to protect habitat here in the U.S., but it also has to be done in Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, or any other country a bird uses on its migration.

This challenge was recognized nearly 100 years ago with the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act – one of our nation's first federal wildlife laws. The act implements bird conservation treaties with Russia, Japan, Canada, and Mexico and is the heart of federal efforts to protect migratory birds in the United States.

One of the most fundamental things this law does is create a list of protected migratory birds. This list was recently updated, bringing the total number of protected birds to 1007. This is the first update to the list since 1985 and includes a net increase of 175 species, including 65 that have been documented in the United States since 1985. Birds on the list range from the tiny rainbow-hued painted bunting to the Canada goose. These birds are protected by hunting and permitting regulations that control how many and under what circumstance the birds can be possessed, sold, transported, purchased, imported, or exported.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.